

## Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 EB-11 CIEP-03 TRSE-00 STR-08 OMB-01

CEA-02 COME-00 DRC-01 /136 W  
----- 062317

R 140120Z AUG 74

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2300  
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

UNCLAS MELBOURNE 0964

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, AS

SUBJECT: SIR ROBERT MENZIES, SENIOR STATESMAN

COMMENTS ON CURRENT SCENE

1. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF RELATIVELY MINOR CIVIC OCCASION,  
FORMER PRIME MINISTER SIR ROBERT MENZIES, ON AUGUST 11  
BROKE LONG SILENCE AND MADE BRIEF SPEECH IN WHICH HE  
WENT FAR BEYOND NEEDS OF OCCASION.

2. ACCEPTING FREEDOM OF CITY OF KEW, MELBOURNE  
SATELLITE MUNICIPALITY, 79 YEAR OLD STATESMAN ISSUED  
CALL FOR "GREAT MOOD OF UNSELFISHNESS TO BEAT  
INFLATION" CURRENTLY UNDERMINING THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY.

3. AVOIDING PEJORATIVE PHRASES HE ADDRESSED AUSTRALIAN  
PEOPLE DIRECTLY STATING "WE DON'T NEED ECONOMISTS'  
THEORIES BUT A GREAT MOOD OF UNSELFISHNESS. UNLESS  
WE ARE PREPARED TO BE ON THE LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS  
WE CANNOT COMPLAIN OF THE PURELY SELFISH INTEREST  
OF OTHERS".

4. CHARACTERIZING PRESENT SITUATION AS "MORAL CRISIS  
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FOR THE PEOPLE" FORMER PRIME MINISTER WENT ON TO SAY

"IT IS THE UNBRIDLED GREED ON THE PART OF SOME SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY" WHICH COULD BRING THE COUNTRY DOWN.

5. DISAVOWING POLITICAL INTENT, SIR ROBERT SAID ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN NATION, "THE ONE THING THAT SUSTAINED ME OVER THIRTY YEARS OF POLITICS WAS THE FIRM BELIEF THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIANS ARE GOOD, DECENT PEOPLE".

6. COMMENT: UNDER PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM GENERALLY, AND IN AUSTRALIA PARTICULARLY, ROLE OF FORMER LEADERS IS NOT PARTICULARLY WIDELY APPRECIATED, THEREFORE, IMPACT OF MENZIES' SPEECH WILL BE SLOW BUT STADY. MENZIES IS UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF GREAT AUSTRALIANS, LIVING OR DEAD, AND THIS TYPE OF OLD-FASHIONED PATRIOTIC TALK WILL BE WIDELY APPRECIATED DURING DIFFICULT DAYS AHEAD. UNDOUBTEDLY, PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM, A LONG TIME ADMIRER OF MENZIES, CAN BE EXPECTED TO QUOTE THIS SPEECH AS HE HAS SO OFTEN QUOTED MENZIES IN PAST. POST OBSERVES THAT WHOLE PERFORMANCE OF ELDER STATESMAN MENZIES ON THIS OCCASION SHOULD LAY AT REST WIDESPREAD AND ERRONEOUS BELIEF THAT MENZIES IS IN HIS DOTTAGE. WHILE FORMERLY VIGOROUS MAN, IS NOW BOUND TO WHEELCHAIR, IT IS VERY OBVIOUS INDEED, THAT MENZIES' MIND IS VERY SEIZED BY CURRENT PROBLEMS. THESE COGENT COMMENTS ARE PERTINENT, TIMELY AND WILL BE FORWARDED IN ENTIRETY WHEN FULL TEXT AVAILABLE.  
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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** ELAB, AS, (MENZIES, ROBERT)  
**To:** STATE  
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